9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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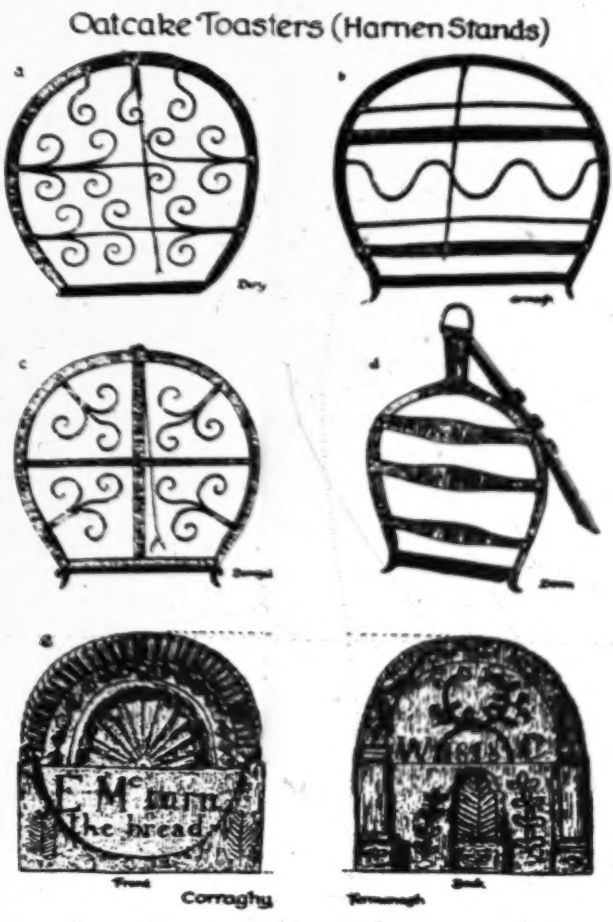

Fig. 33. Scale ¼. a, b, c, d, iron; e, stone.

[p. 74]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

popular, which was for the most part within the last hundred years. 493

It may be suggested that the solid disc wheel influenced the shape of the spoked wheel, both in its narrow rim and small diameter and in the fact that it has very little " dish," and it cannot be denied that the slide car lives on in the structure of the modern cart. This consists essentially of two long " runners " which form in turn the front shafts, the side supports of the body and the back shafts or " trams." These projections are everywhere present and in some districts are as much as 3½ feet long. In its simplest form then, the cart is merely a flat platform resembling a slide-car on wheels, but it can be fitted with sides to make a " box-car," and this has become the standard shape in certain counties. It is now often fitted with old motor wheels and tyres to make a " soft car." Details of decorative work and styles of painting are markedly regional: in the Glens the body is blue and the wheels red: the front board of the cart has a lozenge design panelled or painted in red. Another subject which calls for investigation is the distribution and significance of horse-brasses and other trappings. They represent a very ancient tradition, as finds of the Early Iron Age demonstrate. [531] [492]

During the period of agricultural advancement in the 17-eighties several landlords introduced English waggons and tried to popularize them for farm work, but they were soon abandoned; the one-horse car was found to be much better fitted to the soft roads. Small things, whether we consider vehicles, livestock, fields or villages, seem to characterize Ireland. Except in towns and for processional purposes the four-wheeled vehicle has no place here: we are in the " two-wheeled " culture region. 493 178

We may close this chapter with a few comments on roads and tracks. Very little is known about ancient Irish roads, and although the use of chariots implies a knowledge of road-building one is inclined to be sceptical about the elaborate road system reputed to have existed in early Celtic times. To map these tracks without careful field-study is a popular but 491

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

342 which rest on the thatch directly over the eaves (Fig. 12, 1). This method has an extremely primitive air but it has the advantage over the pinned ropes in that it is simpler to keep the ropes taut. A still older method, frequently seen on thatched stacks and rarely on buildings, is to let the weighted ropes hang from the eaves. In Donegal a century ago boulders weighing fifty or sixty pounds are stated to have been suspended on hay ropes.[1] This very primitive mode is found also in the Inner Hebrides.[2] Roped thatch in general seems to be characteristic [171] of the Atlantic seaboard of Europe and areas around the North Sea.

The most widely distributed mode of thatching is by means of scollops, or sally rods (sometimes hazel, briar or bog-fir), which pin down the thatch. In well-finished work the rods are hidden, for if exposed they tend to let water seep through the scraw, but it is customary to leave a row exposed at the eaves and ridge and against the gables, where the outer layer of straw should lie snugly. The exposed scollops are often arranged [531] in lattice patterns, and the expert thatcher delights in showing his skill and leaving his grace-mark in finishes of various designs which are practical as well as decorative, serving for example to distribute the rain and prevent 'guttering'. Thus twists of straw (bobbins) at the gables carry the drips evenly to the ground. When the ridge—and sometimes the eaves as well—is also adorned with a row of bobbins the scollop-thatched roof can be most attractive (Fig. 13, 1). A thatched chimney occasionally adds the last finishing touch. The word scollop is derived from the Gaelic, and it is natural to assume that this most widely distributed of all styles—from north Antrim through the heart of the Irish midlands to south Cork—is [171] indigenous. But rod-thatching is widespread in England and on the continent, and it may have reached Ireland with the Celts. There are various ways of pushing in the scollops: they may be thrust in at each end (Fig. 14) or bent into wooden staples resembling large hairpins, which secure the ends of horizontal rods (Fig. 13, 1). The scolloped thatch is perhaps best suited to, and is almost universal on, roofs which are

[1] *Dub. Univ. Mag.* 41 (1853), 715.
[2] Colin Sinclair, *Thatched Houses* (1953), 36. [Text continues on p. 56]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

493 177 [401] was reserved for coaches and the carriages of the rich, was popularized by its adoption for farm carts (Scots carts) under the improving zeal of landlords towards the end of the century. In Ulster, which has always looked to Scotland for its inspiration, the Scots cart was first used for transporting linen, and one thinks of it spreading along the improved roads and being copied and adapted to local needs and traditions. Around Lough Erne, for instance, one reads of large one-horse carts, adopted by carriers in the early nineteenth century, which had 'trams' or rearshafts four feet long,[1] and these projections, surely a reminiscence of the long slide-car runners, are still characteristic of the 'flat' carts of the west and south-west (Fig. 60).

493 The Scots cart with its four-foot wheels was able to take twice the load of the native wheel-car, and as industry increased and roads were improved through the nineteenth century it drove the block-wheeled cars off the roads. But for rough work in the fields and bogs various types of slipe were preferred: the cart [554] was little used for harvesting and its possession was to some extent a sign of prestige. (Unlike the native car, the woodwork [531] of the cart was and is brightly painted, usually in red and blue.) The slipe and slide-car were better adapted to moist ground, to undrained fields and the uneven surface of ridge and furrow. As roads and farm practice were improved it was a new version of Scots cart (Fig. 60) which ultimately drove out the slide-car and the wheel-car in Ulster. It seems that the older varieties of Irish carts were derived from the Leith cart of the eastern lowlands of Scotland.[2] The body consisted of little more than a slatted platform without fixed sides and ends. This 'flat cart', as distinct from the 'box cart', is the usual pattern of farm cart in the west of Ireland and, fitted with springs, is the common hawker's cart. As a farm cart it suits the small farmer because it can be used for a variety of purposes by fitting different kinds of sides, for example tall slatted 'crates' for carrying turf.

493 177 531 Towards the middle of the nineteenth century there was evolved, in Lanarkshire and the neighbouring counties, the box cart with upright panelled sides perhaps derived from the

[1] L. Atthill, *Recollections of an Irish Doctor* (1911), 44.
[2] R. L. Edgeworth, *An Essay on the Construction of Roads and Carriages* (1813).

 [Text continues on p. 178]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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wagon, a sturdy vehicle which was manufactured by large Scottish firms and exported far and wide and also copied locally. Its distribution can be readily traced because it carried an unusual design on the front board—the 'spectacles'—consisting of a pattern of linked circles out cut of an outer layer of horizontal boarding which is applied to the main vertical boarding of the front-board. The design is further emphasized by being painted a contrasting colour, red or blue. The spectacle design became a kind of trade-mark of the Lanarkshire style of cart. It may have evolved simply by the gradual enlargement of two curving strengthening boards at top and bottom, until they met to form a design which became standardized (Fig. 61). C. F. Tebbutt is inclined to seek an origin in the magic *oculi* such as occur in prehistoric pottery and to this day on Mediterranean boats, but it is difficult to see the connecting links.[1] If one looks for a more practical origin it could be argued that when freshly painted front-boards were first fitted to carts they were marked and damaged by the rump and tail of the horse. At any rate I have occasionally noticed a spectacle-like pattern rubbed by the horse on to the paint of Scots carts not fitted with the recessed front-board. On this theory the board was strengthened by means of panelling while at the same time the shaped recess gave the horse's rear a little more space and saved the paint.

In Ireland the Scots cart with 'fiddle' (spectacle) decoration has an interesting distribution corresponding closely with the area of historic Scottish influence, from east Down across Antrim to Londonderry and north Donegal. It has replaced the flat-cart over much of Ulster, but the latter survives in south Fermanagh, in an area where thatched houses with hipped roofs are also found, representing an older culture-layer. In Scotland it is found throughout the Highlands and Islands, in the central lowlands and the south-west. In eastern England the Scots cart has replaced older forms over a wide area extending from Lincolnshire to North Bedfordshire and from Essex to South-east Nottinghamshire. Mr. Tebbutt believes that it was first introduced to the fenlands by improving farmers who, in the second half of last century, looked to the Scottish lowlands as a model of farming methods. In all these areas the original

[1] C. F. Tebbutt, *Man*, 55 (1955), 113–17.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

spectacle design was retained but in time instead of being panelled it was merely painted on the front-board. In Ulster carts of this kind, lacking the tilting device of the Scots prototype, have been made until recent years by many local wheelwrights, and it is interesting to notice how the original panelled design, which is present on old specimens, has been replaced by painted motifs which break up into many varieties, some of which are shown in Fig. 61. Mr. Tebbutt illustrates similar sequences of derived decoration on English carts.

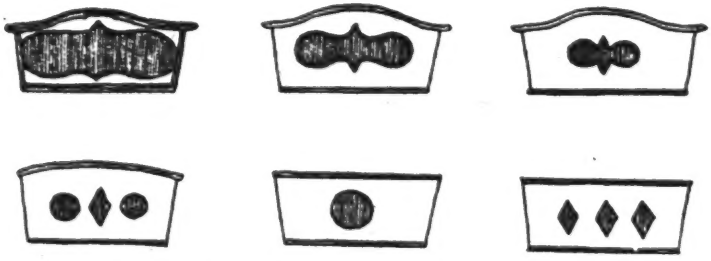

FIG. 61. The 'fiddle' design on the Scots cart in north-eastern Ireland. The front-boards illustrated are all from Co. Antrim and suggest both the derivation and the deterioration of the design. The upper examples are panelled and painted, the lower simply painted. The recess in the 'cape' of the first example is for the horse's tail.

The Scots cart with its box body, ideal for holding sacks of corn or potatoes, is not suited for carrying home crops, and both in Scotland and Ireland it is supplemented by a specialized harvest carrier known as the rick-shifter. This is a large platform with low wheels, fitted with a windlass by which the cock of hay or hut of corn is dragged into position on the platform. It is often dispensed with in moving hay cocks to the haggard, for they can easily be pulled or 'traced' along the ground simply by harnessing a horse to a chain placed around the base of the cock, a method which was used in the eighteenth century (Pl. 12). Six bullocks 'yoked as for ploughing' were employed for this purpose in Co. Meath.[1] The rick-shifter appears to have evolved

[1] W. Thompson, *Meath* (1802), 217. See also J. M. Mogey and G. B. Thompson, loc. cit.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Plate XIV.

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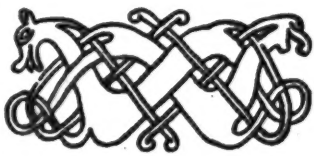
Rath-Blathmaic. "Broc-sidh" and "Sheelah".



"Peists"
Dysert-O'Dea

1910 "Ghost Stone". Clonlara. JFW

[Facing p. 202]

~~To face p. 340~~

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

The knit sweater called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage industry by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "blackberry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41 sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal, a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heritage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons, however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new *crios* if they believe that it has brought them luck.

Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-